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Snakes probably found the heavy antelopes equally dangerous though unwitting foes and many antelopes probably suffered from snake bite. No rattle was evolved, however, but some of the common veldt-ranging snakes secured protection in another way. Several common cobras and cobra-allies learned to expell their poison in a fine spray for very considerable distances, and with a fairly shrewd aim at the eye. The poison, of course, is not caustic, the skin is unaffected; prey cannot be secured by this means but the moist eye allows of an absorption so rapid that sharp pain and subsequent photophobia instantly results from the contact. Gardeners who work stooping about shrubbery have come into the Bulawayo hospital with acute conjunctivitis. The Dutch call *Sepedon* the "Spuw slang" or spitting snake, a poor name, however, as the saliva is not involved. Natives know the habit and fear all spitting snakes. Here again, however, the habit must antedate man's coming, for contact between man and the snakes can hardly be conceived as sufficiently frequent to account for the modification. Moreover, the modification would not have been particularly protective since man would inevitably become increasingly prone to kill the offensive reptiles. Against hordes of grazing ruminants, however, the protection is probably perfectly efficient. The eyes are easily assailed and the injured creature rushes away followed doubtless by its comrades. The snake thus, whether aided by a warning sound or by the infliction of transitory pain, is aided at the time of its most frequent danger.

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## AN UNUSUAL TYPE OF ABNORMAL COLORATION IN LIZARDS

Absence or excessive development of one or more of the dermal pigments has been noted repeatedly in reptiles and amphibians. Albinism, erythrism or melanism may result when these changes exceed the

ordinary limits of individual variation. Thus, a specimen of *Crotalus oregonus* (Cal. Acad. Sci. No. 38098) from Thompson, Grand County, Utah, is creamy white without any darker markings. Here, pigment is lacking both as regards the ground color and the pattern. Another type of abnormal pigmentation is seen in certain specimens of lizards. In these, the usual ground colors are perfectly developed but the pattern is entirely lacking. This is not of frequent occurrence, for I have seen it only in one *Gerrhonotus scincicauda scincicauda* and two *Sceloporus scalaris*. One of the latter was kept alive for over a month without any change in coloration. The absence of dark markings, therefore, appears to be permanent, and to have nothing in common with such changes as one observes in *Uta stansburiana*, for instance, where the dark dorsal blotches may come and go from day to day.

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## A NORTHERN RECORD FOR THE WATER MOCCASIN

During the past few summers a snake has been seen a number of times among some old logs in a small creek near Bristol, Harrison County, West Virginia. Attempts to collect it have failed, although opportunities to observe it rather closely have been had on one or two occasions.

Its ground color was dark-brown with blotches of darker brown, the head being much darker than the rest of the body. The upper lip has a whitish streak that extended well back, almost to the neck. From this description it would seem to be the Water Moccasin, *Agkistrodon piscivorus*.

As far as I can discover, this seems to be the most northern record for this form.

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